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THE GODLIKE IAMBLICHUS.*

In the cities of Asia Minor, Nicomedia, Pergamos, Smyrna, whither nineteen-year-old Julian had wandered in search of Grecian wisdom, he had heard of the famous theurgist and sophist, Iamblichus of Chalcidica, the pupil of the Neoplatonist Porphyry,—the godlike Iamblichus, as all men called him.

Julian went to him in Ephesus.

Iamblichus was an old man, small, lean, wrinkled.

He loved to complain of his illnesses, his gout, his rheumatism, his headaches. He abused the doctors, but carefully followed their treatment. He took great delight in talking about poultices, infusions, medicines and plasters. He went about in a soft lined tunic, even in summer, and could never keep warm. He was as fond of the sun as a lizard.

From his early youth, Iamblichus had abstained from eating flesh, and spoke of it with sincere disgust. He could not understand how people could eat anything that had had life. His maid-servant prepared him a special kind of barley porridge, a little warm wine, and honey. Even bread the old man could not masticate with his toothless gums.

Around him were gathered a great crowd of pupils, full of respect and adoration for him, from Rome, Antioch, Carthage, Egypt, Mesopotamia, and Persia. All believed that Iamblichus worked miracles. He treated them like a father, who was weary of having so many little, helpless children. When they began to dispute or quarrel, the teacher waved his hand with a grimace of physical pain.

He spoke in a gentle, pleasant voice, and the higher rose the voices of the disputants, the more gently spoke Iamblichus. He could not endure noise, and hated loud voices and creaking sandals.

Julian, greatly disappointed, looked with perplexity at the capricious, shivering, sick, old man, unable to see what power could attract people to him.

He remembered that it was said that his pupils had seen him once, at night, at the hour of prayer, raised by a miraculous force ten cubits above the ground, and surrounded with an aureole of golden radiance. And there was another story of how the teacher, in the Syrian town of Gadara, had evoked from the two springs of Eros and Anteros, a joyful genius of love, with fair curls, and a dark, sorrowful spirit. Both nestled up to Iamblichus, like children, and vanished again at a wave of his hand.

Julian listened to the words of the teacher, but could find no power in them. The metaphysics of the school of Porphyry seemed him dry, dead, and terribly complicated. Iamblichus seemed to be playing at overcoming dialetic difficulties on contested points. In his teaching of God, of the world, of Ideas, of the Triad of Plotinus, there was deep book-knowledge,—and not a spark of life. Julian had expected something different.

Nevertheless, he waited, and did not go away.

Iamblichus had strange, green eyes, which showed even more distinctly against his dusky, wrinkled skin. Sometimes the evening sky has this greenish color, when seen between dark clouds, before a storm. It seemed to Julian that in those eyes, which were not human, and still less divine, there gleamed that occult, higher, serpentlike wisdom, of which Iamblichus uttered not a word to his disciples. But suddenly, in a tired, low voice, the godlike teacher asked why his barley porridge or poultices were not ready, or complained of his gout, and Julian's reverence vanished.

Once he was walking with Julian outside the city, on the seashore. It was a soft, sad evening. Far off, over the harbor of Panormos, gleamed the white terraces of the famous temple of Diana of the Ephesians, crowned with statues. On the sandy shore of Cayster,—it was here, according to tradition, that Latona gave birth to Apollo and Diana,—the thin, dark reeds were motionless. The smoke of innumerable altars from the sacred grove of Ortygia rose in straight columns to the sky. To the south, the mountains of Samos shone white. The beating of the breakers was soft as the breath of a sleeping child. Transparent waves broke

over the smooth, black sand. There was a smell of the salt water warmed by the sun, and of seaweed. The setting sun was hidden behind the clouds, gilding their piled-up masses.

Iamblichus sat down on a stone, and Julian reclined at his feet. The teacher stroked Julian's stiff, black hair:

"You are sad?"

"Yes!"

"I know, I know. You are seeking, but not finding. You have not the strength to say: 'He is;' and you have not the courage to say 'He is not.'"

"How did you guess, teacher?"

"Poor boy! I have been suffering from the same malady for fifty years. And I shall suffer, to the day of my death. Do you think I know Him more than you do? These are perpetual birth-pains. In comparison with them, all other pains are as nothing. People think that they suffer from hunger or thirst or pain or poverty. In reality they suffer only from the thought that perhaps He is not. This is the only suffering in the world. Who dares to say 'He is not'? and who knows what superhuman power is needed to say 'He is'?"

"And you, even you have never drawn near to Him?"

"Thrice in my life I experienced the ecstasy, the full absorption into Him. Plotinus experienced it four times. Porphyry, five. There were three moments in my life for the sake of which it was worth while to live."

"I asked your pupils about this. They knew nothing."

"Do they dare to know? The husks of wisdom are enough for them. For almost all men, the kernel is deadly."

"Let me die, teacher! But give it to me!"

"You dare?"

"I dare! Tell me! tell me!"

"What can I tell you? I know not how. And is it right to speak of it? Listen to the stillness of the evening. It will tell you the secret better than any words."

And he stroked Julian's head as before, as though he had been a child. The pupil thought: "This is it! this is what I was waiting for!" He clasped Iamblichus' knees, looked up entreatingly into his eyes, and said:

"Teacher, have pity! Reveal all. Do not desert me."

Iamblichus spoke low, as if to himself, as if he neither heard nor saw his pupil. His strangely unmoving, green eyes were fixed

on the clouds, inwardly gilded by the sun.

"Yes, yes, we have all forgotten the Father's voice. Like children separated from the Father from our cradles, we hear it, and do not recognize it. There must be perfect silence in the soul, a ceasing of all earthly and heavenly voices. Then may we hear His voice. While the reason shines, and like a noonday sun illumines the soul, we remain in ourseves, and behold not God. But when the reason draws near to its setting, an ecstasy comes over the soul, like the dew of evening. The wicked cannot feel that ecstasy. Only the wise man becomes a lyre, which trembles and resounds under the hand of God. Whence comes the light that illumines the soul? I know not. It comes stealthily, when you do not expect it. It cannot be sought out. God is not far from us. We must prepare ourselves. We must be full of quietness, and wait, as the eyes wait, for the rising of the sun that uplifts his light, in the words of the poet, from the dark ocean. God neither comes nor goes. He only manifests himself. And then He is the opposite of the world, the opposite of all that is. He is nothing. He is All."

Iamblichus rose from the stone, and slowly spread his lean, weak hands.

"Be still, be still,—I say unto you,—be still! Hearken unto Him. He is here. Let the earth and the sea be silent, and the air, and even the heavens! Hearken! It is He who fills the universe, piercing the atoms with His breath, and illumining matter,—Chaos, 'that makes the gods to fear,'—as the evening sun gilds that dark cloud."

Julian listened, and it seemed to him that the teacher's voice, weak and low, filled the world, reaching even to the very heavens, to the utmost limits of the deep. But Julian's sadness was so great that it escaped from his breast in an involuntary sigh:

"My father, forgive me, but if it be so, to what end is life? why this eternal alternation of life and death? why are there sufferings? why is there evil? why is there a body? why are there doubts? why is there a longing after the impossible?"

Iamblichus shuddered slightly, laid his hand on Julian's hair once more, and answered:

"That is where the mystery lies, my son. There is neither evil, nor the body, nor the world, if He is. Either He, or the world. It seems to us that there is evil, that there is the body, that there is the world. This is but an illusion,—a cheat of life. Remember—all have one soul, all men, and even inarticulate things. There was a

time when we all rested together in the bosom of the Father, in the everlasting night. But once we looked from above, into the darkness, the material world, and each saw in it his own image, as in a mirror. And the soul said to itself: 'I can and will be free! I am as He is. Can I not dare to separate myself from him, and become the All?' The soul, like Narcissus in the stream, was taken captive by the beauty of its own image, mirrored in the body. And then it fell; it wished to fall to the end, to separate itself from God forever—and could not. The feet of a mortal touch the earth; his brow is higher than the summit of heaven. And so by the everlasting ladder of birth and death, souls, all beings, rise to Him, and descend from Him. They try to depart from the Father, and cannot. Every soul wishes to be a god, but in vain; it longs for the bosom of the Father, and finds no rest on earth, thirsting to return to the One. We must return to Him, then all will be God, and God will be all. Are you the only one who longs for Him? See what a heavenly sadness there is in the stillness of nature. Listen! Can you not feel that all things are longing for Him?"

The sun set. The golden, incandescent clouds grew cold. The sea became pale and ethereal as the sky. The sky, as blue and clear as the sea. Along the road a wagon rumbled. In it sat a youth and a woman,—two lovers, perhaps. The woman's voice sang a sad, familiar love-song. Afterwards all once more became silent, and still sadder. The swift, southern night descended from the heavens. Julian murmured:

"How often I have wondered why nature is so sad. The more beautiful, the sadder it is."

Iamblichus replied with a smile:

"Yes, yes! nature would fain say what she is grieving for, but cannot. She is dumb. She sleeps, and tries to remember God in her slumber, through the veil of her dream, but cannot, because of the burden of matter. She conceives God dimly and dreamily. All worlds, all stars, and the sea, and the earth, and living things, and trees, and people,—all are nature's dreams of God. What she conceives, is born and dies. She creates by conceiving only, as happens in dreams; creates easily, knowing neither effort nor obstacle. That is why the waves of her creation are so beautiful, so purposeless, so divine. Nature plays at seeing visions,—it is like the sport of the clouds. Without beginning, it is without end. Beyond conceiving, there is nothing in the universe. The deeper it is, the quieter. Will, struggle, action, are only weak, incomplete, or

clouded dreams of God. Nature, in her mighty inactivity, creates forms, like Geometry. What she sees, exists. She pours forth form after form, from her maternal bosom. But her dim and silent conception is only the image of another, and a brighter one. Nature seeks the word, and finds it not. Nature is the sleeping mother Cybele, with eyes perpetually closed. Man alone has discovered the word which nature sought, and found not. The soul of man is nature, opening her sleeping lids, awakening, and ready to behold God—no longer in a dream, but openly—face to face."

The first stars shone out on the darkening and deepening sky. Now and again they faded, only to flash up again once more. They seemed to rotate, like great diamonds strung to the firmament. New stars kept lighting up, and ever new ones. Iamblichus pointed to them:

"To what shall I liken the world—all these suns and stars? I shall liken them to a net, cast by the fishermen into the sea. The net moves, but cannot stop the water, and the universe tries to lay hold on God, but cannot. The net moves, but God is still, as the limitless ocean, in which the net is cast. If the universe did not move, God would have created nothing, would not have moved from his repose; for why and what should He strive after? There, in the kingdom of the eternal Mothers, in the bosom of the Universal Spirit, lie the seeds, the Idea-forms, of all that has been, and shall be,—the Logos lies hidden, the germ of the cricket, of a blade of grass, and side by side with them, the germ of the Olympian God."

Then Julian cried aloud, and his voice sounded on the evening stillness like a cry of mortal pain:

"But who is He? Who is He? Why does He not answer when we cry to Him? What is His name? I would know Him, see and hear Him. Why does He evade my thoughts? Where is He?"

"Poor child,—what means thought before Him? He has no name. He is of such nature that we can only say what He cannot be, and never what He is. But you cannot suffer without praising Him; you cannot love without praising Him; you cannot curse without praising Him. Creating all, He himself is nought of what He has created. When you say 'He is not,' you offer Him not less praise than when you say 'He is.' Nought can be affirmed of Him; neither existence, nor being, nor life; because He is above all existence, higher than all being, beyond all life. That is why I said He is the negation of the world, the negation of your thought. Turn away from the existent, from all that is; and there, in the abyss of

the abyss, the depths of unspeakable darkness, like to the light, thou shalt find Him. Give up for Him friends and kin and land, heaven and earth, and thyself and thy reason. Then thou shalt no longer see the light, for thou shalt be the light. Thou wilt no longer say: 'He and I;' thou wilt feel that He and thou are one; and thy soul will mock at thine own body, as at a mirage. Then—the silence, and no more words at all. And if the world, at that very moment, should fall into ruins, thou wilt rejoice, for what is the world to thee who are one with Him? Thy soul will desire no more, for He is above life; it will not think, because He is higher than thought. Thought is a searching for the light, but He seeks not the light, because He is the Light. He penetrates thy soul utterly, and re-creates it into Himself. And then above passion and alone, it rests above reason; higher than the righteous, higher than the realm of Ideas, higher than beauty, in the abyss, in the bosom of the Father of Lights. The soul becomes God, or to speak more truly, it understands at last that throughout the eternities, it was, and is, and shall be God. . . . Such, my son, is the life of the Olympians, such is the life of godlike men and sages. A renunciation of all that is in the world, a contempt for the passions of earth, the flight of the soul to Him whom it beholds face to face."

He was silent, and Julian fell at his feet, not daring to touch him, and only kissed the earth which the feet of the holy man had touched. Then the pupil raised his face, and gazed into those strange green eyes, in which shone the unveiled secret of the Serpent's wisdom. They seemed quiet, and deeper than the sky; within them seemed to flow a magical power. Julian whispered:

"Teacher, you can do all things. I believe! Command the mountains, and the mountains will move! Be like Him! Work a miracle! Accomplish the impossible; pity me; I believe!"

"My poor child, what do you ask of me? Is not the miracle which may be accomplished in your soul greater than any miracle that I can work. My child, is not that miracle more terrible and divine, that power in whose name you dare to say: "He is,' and if He is not, all the same 'He shall be.' And you say: 'So shall He be; I will it so!'"

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*From D. S. Mereshkovski's novel, "Julian the Apostate," translated by *Charles Johnston*, Altemus, Philadelphia.

THE RELATION BETWEEN THE MASTERS AND CHELAS.

By H. P. Blavatsky.

REPRINTED.

* * * * You have no right as a body (Theosophical Society) to thrust occultism upon ignorant masses who, knowing nothing of its laws and philosophy, would be but more deeply thrown into superstition. Let your line be a broad one of universal brotherhood. Work for the good and regeneration of the world before that of your country and for that of your country before you work for self, and if you work unselfishly and help the founders of the Theosophical Society to place the Society on a firm footing and increase its sphere of progress and usefulness, then when the hour comes we shall call you to our secret places for initiation into the mysteries. But you must deserve this by work and deeds, not words. You will be judged not merely by your desires, but by the amount of practical good you may do to the world and to your country, and the assistance you may render to the founders.

* * * * Once that a Theosophist would become a candidate for either chelaship or favours, he must be aware of the mutual pledge, tacitly, if not formally offered and accepted between the two parties, and that such a pledge is sacred. It is a bond of seven years of probation. If during that time, notwithstanding the many human shortcomings and mistakes of the candidate (save two which it is needless to specify in print) he remains throughout every temptation true to the chosen Master, (or Masters, in the case of lay candidates), and as faithful to the Society founded at their wish and under their orders, then the Theosophist will be initiated into * * * * * and thence forward allowed to communicate with his guru unreservedly; his failings may be overlooked; they belong to his future karma, but are left for the present to the discretion and judgment of the Master. He alone has the power of judging whether even during those long seven years the chela will be favoured regardless of his mistakes and sins, with occasional communications with, and from the guru.

The latter, thoroughly posted as to the causes and motives that led the candidate into sins of omission and commission, is the only one to judge of the advisability or inadvisability of bestowing encouragement, as he alone is entitled to it, seeing that he is himself under the inexorable law of karma, which no one from the Zulu savage up to the highest archangel can avoid—and that he has to

assume the great responsibility of the causes created by himself.

Thus the chief and the only indispensable condition required in the candidate or chela on probation, is simply unswerving fidelity to the chosen Master and his purposes. This is a condition sine quâ non; not as I have said, on account of any jealous feeling, but simply because the magnetic rapport between the two once broken, it becomes at each time doubly difficult to re-establish it again, and that it is neither just nor fair that the Masters should strain their powers for those whose future course and final desertion they very often can plainly foresee. Yet how many of those who, expecting as I would call it "favours by anticipation," and being disappointed, instead of humbly repeating *mea culpa,* tax the Masters with selfishness and injustice. They will deliberately break the thread of connection ten times in one year, and yet expect each time to be taken back on the old lines! I know of one Theosophist—let him be nameless, though it is hoped he will recognize himself—a quiet intelligent young gentleman, a mystic by nature, who, in his ill-advised enthusiasm and impatience, changed Masters and his ideas about half a dozen times in less than three years. First he offered himself, was accepted on probation, and took the vow of chelaship; about a year later, he suddenly had the idea of getting married, though he had several proofs of the corporeal presence of his Master, and had several favours bestowed upon him. Projects of marriage failing, he sought "Masters" under other climes and became an enthusiastic Rosicrucian; then he returned to Theosophy as a Christian mystic; then again sought to enliven his austerites with a wife; then gave up the idea and turned spiritualist. And now having applied once more "to be taken back as a chela" (I have his letter) and his Master remaining silent—he renounced him altogether to seek in the words of the above manifesto—his old "Essenian Master and to test the spirits in His name." * * * *

Yet to those Theosophists, who are displeased with the Society in general—no one has ever made you any rash promises; least of all, have either the society or its founders ever offered their "Masters" as a chromo-premium to the best behaved. For years every new member has been told that he was promised nothing, but had everything to expect only from his own personal merit. The Theosophist is left free and untrammeled in his actions. Whenever displeased—alia tentanda via est—no harm in trying elsewhere; unless, indeed, one has offered himself and is decided to win the Masters' favour. To such especially I now address myself and ask,—Have you ful-

filled your obligation and pledges? Have you who would fain lay all the blame on the Society and the Masters—the latter the embodiment of charity, tolerance, justice and universal love—have you led the life; and fulfilled the conditions required from one who becomes a candidate? Let him who feels in his heart and conscience that he has never once failed seriously, never doubted his Master's wisdom, never sought other Master or Masters in his impatience to become an occultist with powers; and that he has never betrayed his Theosophical duty in thought or deed—let him I say, rise and protest. He can do so fearlessly; there is no penalty attached to it, and he will not even receive a reproach, let alone be excluded from the Society—the broadest and most liberal in its views, the most catholic of all the societies known or unknown. I am afraid my invitation will remain unanswered. During the eleven years of the existence of the Theosophical Society, I have known, out of the seventy-two chelas regularly accepted on probation and the hundreds of lay candidates—only three who have not hitherto failed, and one only who had a full success. No one forces any one into chelaship; no promises are uttered, none except the mutual pledge between Master and would-be chela. Verily, verily many are called but few are chosen—or rather few have the patience of going to the bitter end, if bitter we can call simple perseverance and singleness of purpose. And what about the Society in general, outside of India? Who among the many thousands of members does lead the life? Shall any one say because he is a strict vegetarian—elephants and cows are that—or happens to lead a celibate life, after a stormy youth in the opposite direction; or because he studies the Bhagavat Gita or the "Yoga philosophy" upside down, that he is a Theosophist according to the Masters' hearts? As it is not the cowl that makes the monk, so no long hair with a poetical vacancy on the brow are sufficient to make of one a faithful follower of divine wisdom. Look around you, and behold our Universal Brotherhood so called! The Society founded to remedy the glaring evils of Christianity, to shun bigotry and intolerance, cant and superstition, and to cultivate real universal love extending even to the dumb brute, what has it become in Europe and America in these eleven years of trial? In one thing only we have deserved to be considered higher than our Christian brothers, who according to Lawrence Oliphant's graphic expression "kill one another for brotherhood's sake and fight as devils for the love of God"—and this is that we have made away with every dogma and are now as justly and wisely trying to make away with the last vestige of even nominal authority. But in every

other respect we are as bad as they are: backbiting, slander, uncharitableness, criticism, incessant war-cry and din of mutual rebukes that Christian Hell itself might be proud of. And all this, I suppose, is the Masters' fault. They will not help those who help others on the way of salvation and liberation from selfishness with kicks and scandals. Truly, we are an example to the world, and fit companions for the holy ascetics of the Snowy Range!

OUTFLOW AND INFLOW.

The members of the T. S. have for their future study and enlightment, as has already been said by one of their members, one of the grandest philosophies ever given to man. To many of them, perhaps to the majority, this philosophy seems also the highest and most complete expression of Truth yet given. Once convinced of this, the theosophist finds himself confronted by two necessities: the necessity of at least a partial intellectual grasp of its system, and the necessity of applying and practically demonstrating its truth to a greater or less extent in his individual life and character.

From this theory of life he must deduce a working basis by means of which his final perfection shall be attained. Those who have done, and those who may yet do this are alone entitled to the term "Theosophist."

All effort heretofore given in study; in attempts to grasp the fundamental principles and truths of a philosophy so all-embracing as ours; in aspiration and endeavor, both inward and outward, to apply and relate some portions of this great knowledge to ourselves as individuals, to the T. S. as a body, and to humanity in general, will be unfruitful of the desired results should we, individually and collectively, fail to deduce from it all a solid basis upon which to build the future, with clear perception of the true methods by which its proportions, beauty and strength are to be attained.

The maximum of achievement with the minimum of dissipation and diffusion of force or power should be striven for in our present work, and in all activities arising in the future.

Possibly, the mental query may here be made by some: "What is our present work? I see but little activity going on in the T. S." We all acknowledge its subsidence in much of the outer work; and I think it can be added that we should greatly congratulate ourselves thereon, as it gives us time for deeper reflexion, and a better chance to recognize our actual position. From this there might suddenly come to some—as an inspiration—the fact that things with-

in the T. S. are going ahead with such strides—notwithstanding the apparent sluggishness—that unless they quicken their own footsteps very considerably, they will ere long be so far in the rear that they will be forced to give up the march altogether in this incarnation. That might be a little humiliating to some of those who fancy so little is being done!

If there are still some who are a little discouraged, who do not see the way quite clearly, who have not even yet fully recovered from a somewhat dazed condition, the result of past shocks, they should pick up hope, find courage to look more deeply within themselves, perhaps being rewarded thereby with clearer recognition of their own strength.

That they have been severely tried, and are yet standing within the ranks, gives fair promise for their further progression, with a growing assurance that "all is well". Those who know that not only are they now able to "stand alone" but that they are learning to walk, and with no uncertain step, are waiting with patience and in sympathy for those who hestitate at every fresh step. Knowing how great has been the gain to themselves with every forward venture, they would bid the faint-hearted take courage, looking forward to the future of the T. S. with quiet confidence; a confidence born, not of the other people's opinions, but from knowledge of the Law of all Life, the Law of Cycles, both great and small.

We have reached that point where theory must become practice; a point where intellectual knowledge must become vivified by intuitional knowledge; a point where each one must find for himself his own inner guide and Master if he would henceforth travel the Path. In other words, he must find and recognize his own centre. Those who yet being under the necessity of following in the footsteps of another, of being led and controlled by that other's individual light, are not yet ready to "stand alone," having so far failed to acknowledge the Master within themselves.

They rest upon another's power; basking in the light and warmth of a borrowed radiance which will in time as surely lull to sleep their own higher psychic powers as that the body quickly slumbers under the sensuous influence of external warmth and repose. And it will be well for all of us if, instead of doing likewise or giving way to discontent and complaint, we bend all our energies upon *keeping awake*, that we may arrive at full knowledge of the course we are steering.

After all effort and achievement there comes a lull, a period of

outward inactivity. But, where not indicative of final withdrawal, this temporary absence or cessation of force is only apparent, an ingathering of energy, a deeper inspiration of the Great Breath, a concentration upon higher, more interior planes, the silence that comes after the closing and completion of a cycle, be it great or small.

With the closing years of this century, the completion of a great cycle has taken place. The vast amount of energy expended, and the powerful forces at work not only on the physical and intellectual, but also on the spiritual planes in its latter end, are facts so patent as to impress themselves upon even the most mediocre intelligence. That this tidal-wave of Force has reached the extreme limit of materiality is demonstrated in the great mechanical progress of the age; in its machinery and inventions, some of which are of so fine and delicate a character as not only to faithfully register the tones of the human voice, reproduce muscular action, but even cast some objective shadow of thoughts and emotions. Mechanical ingenuity cannot go much farther than this. And already we see in the successful experiments with wireless telegraphy, and in the most recent discoveries of Science, a receding of the great tide from the grossly material and mechanical into the higher planes and the finer forces of nature, which are as the outer shores of its occult regions, the intermediary plane between the known and the unknown.

With the end of this year closes also the cycle for the expenditure of that specially directed force and energy which has been finding its way for years in powerful currents through the T. S. This force-wave has—analogously with the above—also touched its extreme point in outward expression, and in the past year or two its receding, indrawing current has been making itself felt in a condition of greatly accelerated outward activity among those elements of its body seeking expression on a plane of action the most immediately productive of results, (all expressions of energy become most active immediately before its indrawal to interior planes; who is not familiar with the illustration: the dying flame of a candle flickers up brightest at the last!) whilst those elements more readily influenced and controlled by this indrawing force have receded and will continue to recede with it until reaching the plane of its original projection.

Cannot we see in this the *raison d'être* for the disruption of the T. S. and the severing of its body into various unaffiliated organizations, finding its cause in the necessity of a law which uses per-

sons and events as but instruments for the accomplishment of its immutable purposes? At any rate from this point of view would come a clearer comprehension as to our own and others' stand; deeper insight into the past, present and future would be gained, with a great advance towards equilibrum, self-poise and calmness, from which would inevitably flow a purer stream of love, a brighter patience, a wider toleration, and an inspiration to deeper resolve and more determined effort to work ever with—never against—the Law.

This contraction then, in the T. S., as an organization, would be but in accord with such law. Having completed its cycle of outward evolution the spiral turns backward upon itself in its cycle of involution. From the period of outflow we have reached the period of inflow. The seeds borne upon the bosom of this mighty tide have had time in which to perfect their growth and give forth their fruits. Those which have not done so will have lost their present chance, and must await the return of the cycle when there will again be an outflow of the Force. The seed-time of the present harvest is over; the conditions for a fresh or continued sowing no longer exist. The spring-time of our work, the golden summer with its warmth and glow, have come and gone; the autumn-time with its ripened grain, its swiftly-changing hues, is now upon us; and we feel the gentle touch of the approaching silence in this ingathering of the forces; the stillness, the calmness, the satisfaction that comes with the season of rest, after the cycle of outward effort and achievement.

When Nature ceases in her efforts to put forth, covering herself in her mantle of silence, we know that hers is not the stillness of death; that in her periods of dreamless sleep she still works on in the causal world of creative forces.

Let us then follow Nature, seek to enter with her the silent realm and create a future that shall far exceed and outshine the past.

We should remember that "It is only for an interval that Nature can be still," and the silence will end, and then from it shall arise a voice, and this voice will say, "It is not well; thou hast reaped, now thou must sow. And knowing this voice to be the silence itself, thou wilt obey."

E. D. Pelton.

ORIENTAL DEPARTMENT.

Edited by Charles Johnston.

THE TURNING TIDE.

"There are those who draw near to Thee through will, holding Thee ever in their hearts; there are those who draw near in thought to the unchanging Eternal; which of these follow the more excellent way?"

"They who draw near to me, holding me ever in their hearts, and with hearts drawn into me, full of perfect aspiration, these I esteem followers of the highest way.

"Yet they who draw near in thought to the unchanging nameless Eternal, the unthinkable all-present, the unmoving foundation which stands for ever firm;

Checking every impulse toward sensual life, with souls for ever balanced, these also come to me, rejoicing in the well-being of all creatures.

"Yet the path is hard, for those who fasten their thought on the unmanifest; the unmanifest way is difficult for those who dwell in bodies.

"But they who rest all the works of their wills on me, who aspire in heart towards me, who draw near single-minded, seeking the vision of me,

"For them I become a deliverer, raising them up from the ocean of death and embodied life; I quickly lift up those who lodge their wills in me.

"Therefore lead thy heart forward into me; let thy soul enter me; and thenceforth thou shalt surely abide with me forever."

Songs of the Master.

Century after century the tide has flowed in from the great sea of Life, to refresh the hearts and lives of men; and after leaving with them a certain measure of power and inspiration, has flowed back again lonely to the great lonely ocean.

But this time it is to be otherwise. The tide is to carry us with it to the immortal sea. Already the flood is full. The quiet time between flow and ebb is upon us, and the moment draws nearer when we must launch our boats upon the waves. Perhaps we should like it to be for ever high water, in a tideless sea; so that we might linger endlessly in the shallow margin; on the deep, yet within comfortable sight of the shore. Yet this may not be. The eternal tides of life

must come and go, with the great heart-beats of the eternal Being; and the tide which flowed must ebb, carrying us out with it into the unknown, or leaving us stranded on the beach.

If it were a comfortable inland lake, there would be no tide, no ebb, and no hazardous setting forth for the unknown; but this is the boundless ocean, and we must soon make up our minds whether to go or stay; to remain sheltered among the sandhills, or trim our sails and set forth with the evening breeze into the gathering twilight, the purple gloom that covers the unknown.

There will be some among us who elect to turn back at the last, thinking that their courage and desire for adventure in the unknown will have grown, and that they will be of better heart, next time the tide comes in. Yet many of us will make the voyage, and begin to learn the secrets of the immortal sea. The twilight of evening, while we still linger under the shadow of the shore, will soon become the first dawning on the deep, and we shall feel the strong life of the everlasting begin to tingle in our veins. Little by little, we shall learn to forget that we were once shore-dwellers, sheltering ourselves among time's sandhills, and grow more and more into the life of our ever-flowing, yet ever restful home.

Every simile may be strained too far; and this one, perhaps, has been carried far enough. Yet we must speak in symbols, for only in the inviolate life of nature can we find images of the living powers of the soul. Our human life is too corrupt, too sophisticated, too full of wire-drawn subtleties, of artificial thought and wholly false values, to yield us even the material of true symbols. We are hardened, frozen as it were into srange forms and pressures of life; the sap has flowed from us, and we are left withered and dry, along the shores of death. Therefore, this symbol of the sea of life has its first application here. All that is hard and crystallized in us, all rigid forms and dry husks of by-gone times, all the unchanging molds of mind which cramp our imaginations and limit the outflow of our hearts by fancied boundaries: all this hard, dry life must pass away, to give place to the everflowing waters of the ocean. We must be ready to live henceforward without any fixed barrier or defence; open on all sides to the flowing tides of life; responsive to the instant inspiration of the soul, an inspiration which each time surpasses itself, and makes old and outworn even our previous intuition. Therefore the truth of the symbol: we must learn to live on the ever-flowing deep, and no longer on firm and unchanging earth.

There is something very disconcerting in this, perhaps; we would greatly prefer some definite rule, some set task to be done;

we would heartily thank the sage who prescribed for us some decalogue, saying that through fulfilling the law we might enter into life. Yet this is just what no sage will do, or would dare to do. Each of us must find his own light, discover his own genius, gain his own footing in the immortal world. We have to deal in the last analysis not with a school of sages, but with the Eternal; with immemorial Life, through which alone the sages come into their power. And no initiation, even the last and highest of all, will ever lift the veil from that mystery: we shall never know whence is the eternal, infinite Life. It must suffice us to know that the Life is, and that we are the Life.

Then comes the world-old question, often asked and often answered: how are we best to enter into the Life? Are we to follow faith or works, meditation or action, thought or will? One answer to this question is translated here. Let us apply the answer to our present needs.

The path of thought and meditation is this, and it will really lead us at last to the goal: we live between two worlds, the hissing sea of the senses on one side, and the quiet deep of the Eternal on the other. If we can make every movement of our imagination cease to respond to the seething waves of the sensual sea, and more and more mirror the quiet deep above, we shall in the fulness of time win a perfect oneness with that peace, and enter living into the living world.

Yet this is a hard way, and the heart of mortal man cannot often compass it. There is another path, the way of will. At every moment of the way, we have some best inspiration, some highest thought; and the path of will directs that we should instantly turn this thought into an act, without even inquiring whether we might reach some thought newer and higher, and in whose light our present act would show full of imperfections and shortcomings. Instant act, for every best thought; no delay, no question or hesitation; no splitting of hairs, nor endless refining of motives, but instant action; instant realization through the will.

The will itself is colorless, equally ready for every act, whether it be to mold earthen jars or carve marble statues. All acts are alike to the will. But if we draw its power into us, and gain the habit of instant act, even for simple and everyday inspirations, we shall be able to count on our will when the great day of illumination comes. Always let the will in us be creative, never let it fall from its divinity to imitate. The difference is this: we imitate, when we act from a thought in some mind other than our own, and thereby

we make our will the servant of another's thought; we are creative when we let the will in us answer only to the thought which rises within ourselves, and thereby we become free. Every imitation makes it harder for the will in us to regain its freedom, and carries us further and further from the fountain of our life. Every creative act, where the will in us responds to a flash from within, makes us stronger, and brings us closer to our home. Therefore we shall soonest become obedient to the immortal tide, if we gain the habit of instant act, and if we act only from within. This is the easier way, smoother for mortal feet to tread; more accessible for common humanity than the difficult path of pure thought.

The habit of will, of instant action, will serve us well at the present hour, and in the hours immediately to come. For as we begin the life of the immortal, the fountains of the deep will be unsealed within us, and innumerable inspirations, long since forgotten and faded out of human life, will begin to make their way back into the morning twilight of our hearts. If we linger too long, too minutely pondering and questioning, the swift inspiration will flit away to some other more responsive soul; we should embody each inspiration at once, without an instant's hesitation. At the least, we shall have learned something, while hesitation has few lessons, and those few ignoble. At the most, we shall have given a new embodied life to the word of the Supreme.

This endless visible world has powers without end stored up in it, which men for ages have utterly forgotten; it has endless powers which no mortal ever knew. For the visible world is the outermost garment of the Life, and in no way less full of treasure than its source. Any inspiration of the will, after we have once boldly embarked, may be the key to some forgotten secret, or to some secret never known. If we act, we may discover the secret; if we hesitate, we shall learn nothing.

Then there is the really magical world which surrounds us, and of which our ignorance is as great as the peace of God: the magical world of our other selves. We cannot learn its first secret until we embark; we shall never learn it at all, unless we act. For to those who have set out, there come endless flashes of intuition as to our other selves; gleams of that great secret, that our other selves are touching us immediately all the time, in direct defiance of the frivolous veils of space. And a life, keen, vivid, infinitely full of promise begins for us with the first intuition of human life; when for the first time our other selves begin to touch us from within.

That is a work which will still be new after ages; for us, it has hardly yet begun. So that we need have no fear that the time will hang heavy on our hands. Every human soul has endless needs and endless powers which are simply never touched in our present life as we have come to live it. That is something of what we mean by the crystallizing and hardening of life, which must all be melted away by the immortal waters. And we may begin at any moment to supply these needs and learn these unknown powers: at any moment after we have embarked with the turning tide. There is all the Oversoul yet to be worked into the tissue of human relations, and now is as good a time as any to begin. Each of us will have his own gleams, his own inspirations, unlike all others, for the great Soul is alive and original at every part; therefore we ought from the outset to eschew the bad habit of copying, and act each one of us bravely for ourselves. So only do children learn to walk. Yet one rule may be laid down as of universal application: let us always think of people as our other selves.

Last task of all, and one embracing all the others: we are to find and keep wide open the doorway between our private souls and the great heart of Life. If we fail in this, all else is futile. Acts of charity have no more virtue for us than crimes; crimes have even the greater virtue of sincerity. If we are faithful in this, ever invoking the immemorial light, and drawing the Power into our lives, then all will be altogether well, though we have to work our way up from the very mire and madness of passion. We shall learn many things on the way, that the white angels do not dream of. Therefore, this last counsel of all: the light, and always the light, though the world be wrapped in darkness, though the heavens fall.

THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY IN AMERICA.

FOUNDED BY H. P. BLAVATSKY AT NEW YORK IN 1875.

Its objects are:

1st. The formation of a nucleus of universal brotherhood without distinctions of race, creed, sex, caste or color.

2d. The study of ancient and modern religions, philosophies and sciences.

3d. The investigation of the unexplained laws of nature and the psychic powers latent in man.

The Society does not pretend to be able to establish at once a universal brotherhood among men, but only strives to create the nucleus of such a body. Many of its members believe that an acquaintance with the world's religions and philosophies will reveal, as the common and fundamental principle underlying these, that "spiritual identity of all Souls with the Oversoul" which is the basis of true brotherhood; and many of them also believe that an appreciation of the finer forces of nature and man will still further emphasize the same idea.

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"To all men and women of whatever caste, creed, race or religious belief, who aim at the fostering of peace, gentleness and unselfish regard one for another, and the acquisition of such knowledge of men and nature as shall tend to the elevation and advancement of the human race, it sends most friendly greeting and freely proffers its services.

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